

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

PORK-BARREL SPENDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. HENSARLING. Madam Speaker, we come tonight to speak about the subject of pork barrel spending at a time when hardworking, middle-income American families are having to cut back on their spending. They're having to cut back on their spending because their paychecks are shrinking; they're shrinking with the high cost of energy; they're shrinking because of the high cost of food.

Since the Democrat majority took control of the economic policies of our Nation almost 18 months ago, gasoline has now approached \$4 a gallon. Milk is already over \$4 a gallon. And all over America people are driving to their convenience stores or driving to their grocery stores, making a decision about gasoline and milk.

It's tough times for hardworking, struggling, middle-income families. And yet, the Democrat majority, in their Budget Resolution, the conference report—which, of course, is the agreement between the Senate and the House—their budget today was passed that included a tax increase on these very same families of \$3,000 for the average family of four to be phased in over the next 3 years, Madam Speaker. Again, while they're struggling to send their kids to college, struggling to make their mortgage payments, struggling to fill up their cars, this is what's happened.

Well, what is fueling the tax increase that the Democrat majority has imposed upon middle-income families throughout our Nation? Well, there's a culture of spending. They presented a budget that represents the highest amount spent in the history of America. There is a culture of spending, and it is fueled by irresponsible pork barrel spending, also known as "earmarks."

Now, when the Democrat majority was in the minority, they made a number of promises. They said earmarks were out of control under the Republican majority. And Madam Speaker, you know, to some extent they were right. But this is a Republican Conference that has learned its lesson. But commitments were made by the Democrat majority that have not been kept.

First of all, the Speaker of the House said we're going to come and we're going to cut earmarks in half. But instead, Madam Speaker, what did we get? Last year, 11,610 items of pork barrel spending put into spending bills by the Democrat majority, the second highest level ever in American history, totaling approximately \$17 billion. Now, some people say, well, \$17 billion isn't a whole lot of money. Well, Madam Speaker, I hope I'm never in Washington so long that I think \$17 billion is not a lot of money. Millions of Americans could pay their annual gasoline bills with the money that's being spent on the pork barrel spending in Washington, DC. That's enough money to preserve the child tax credit, which under the Budget Resolution passed by the Democrat majority is going to disappear. And so I think that is a lot of money. And not only is it a lot of money, it represents waste.

And too often what we see in this pork barrel spending promulgated by the Democrat majority is that we see a triumph of secrecy over transparency, and we see a triumph of the special interests over the national interests, and we see a triumph of seniority and privilege over merit. Now, again, the Democrat majority said they were going to do things differently. Madam Speaker, then minority leader, now Speaker NANCY PELOSI said in USA Today that there has to be transparency. "I would just as soon do away with all the earmarks," right here, USA Today, late 2006. And instead, if we read the spending bills, what we find out is, out of 435 Members of Congress, she's in the top 20, top 20 of pork barrel spending.

Then, chairman of the Democrat Congressional Campaign Committee, RAHM EMANUEL, said, "Well, for far too long business as usual has involved individual Members doling out favors in appropriations and other bills through earmarks. The American people deserve to know more than who sponsored special interest legislation. They deserve earmark reform that puts an end to special interest earmarking and prevents the practice of earmark abuse."

Now, Madam Speaker, that's what they said before they became the majority party here. But what do we see now? And don't just take my word for it, but let's look at what just happened today. Today, as the farm bill was passed, what do we have in there? We have, again, pork barrel spending that apparently appears out of nowhere. We have slush funds for ski slopes. We had the language slipped by the Democrat majority into the farm bill that would benefit a Democrat Senator in Vermont. It would require the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service to sell portions of the Green Mountain National Forest exclusively to the Bromley Ski Resort. And the ski resort advertises, "Bromley's grooming and snowmaking are second to none, and with our 44 trails of varied terrain, from treed glades & true New England

cruisers to sun soft expert mogul fields, everyone in your family will be smiling all day long." Well, Madam Speaker, I'm not sure the American people, who have to put up with this kind of earmark abuse, I don't think they're smiling. Now, maybe the people who own the Bromley Ski Resort in Vermont, they're smiling, you know, they got a nice little deal in the agricultural bill.

Then we had a quarter of a billion dollars slipped in for the Senate Finance Committee Chairman, MAX BAUCUS, to help the Plum Creek Timber Company in Montana sell a parcel of land to the environmental group called The Nature Conservancy. Now, technically, they get to claim a \$250 million tax refund even though they're a non-profit institution and they don't actually pay taxes.

Now, the language was quite careful, Madam Speaker. It was very careful and clever. They wrote this language, they didn't name this particular earmark, but they wrote it in such a way that it only applies to one parcel of land in the entire United States of America, and that is that belonging to the Plum Creek Timber Company in Montana.

And then, Madam Speaker, we have \$170 million for the salmon earmark requested apparently by our own Speaker, NANCY PELOSI. Clearly, there is something fishy in the farm bill.

Now, we were told again that we wouldn't have these earmarks, this pork barrel spending that just kind of drops down from the heavens in these conference reports. We never had a chance to vote on this in the House, Madam Speaker, it just kind of drops down. And so for a Speaker who is supposed to lead by example, who tells the American people that she would just as soon do without earmarks, that she wants an open and ethical and transparent process to slip a \$170 million fishy earmark into the farm bill, this is something the American people need to know.

Why are their taxes being raised by \$3,000 per family of four over the next 3 years? Well, part of the reason is, Madam Speaker, to pay \$170 million for the salmon earmark in the farm bill, to help subsidize the Plum Creek Timber Company, to help the Bromley Ski Resort. So much for cleaning up the earmark process.

You know, we were also told that there certainly wouldn't be any more secrecy in this earmark process.

You know, the former chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee told us that. Yet, that's not the case. Let me quote from the New York Times, not exactly a bastion of conservative thought, on one of the bills that came to this floor last year. "Despite promises by Congress to end the secrecy of earmarks and other pet projects, the House of Representatives has quietly funneled hundreds of millions of dollars to specific hospitals and health care providers." "Instead of naming the hospitals, the bill describes

them in cryptic terms so that identifying a beneficiary is like solving a riddle. Most of the provisions were added to the bill at the request of Democrat law makers."

"Some Republicans have complained about what they call 'hospital pork.'" This is the New York Times reporting this. This, from a Democrat majority who said there would be no more secrecy. And instead, out of all the hospitals throughout the Nation that I'm sure can all use help, somehow the special privilege and secret pork barrel process practiced by the Democrat majority manages to somehow favor a special privileged few and does it in a cryptic secret manner. One more reason that hardworking, middle-income families who are trying to get that paycheck to go a little further are instead seeing that paycheck shrink to pay for more Democratic pork.

And, Madam Speaker, I'm very happy tonight that I am joined by one of the great leaders of fiscal responsibility in this House, one of the most principled Members, one of the most active Members, one of the most courageous Members that I have met in my congressional career. And I am proud that he is a fellow member of the conservative caucus, the Republican Study Committee, a man I am proud to call my friend.

And at this time, I would be happy to yield to the gentleman from Georgia, Dr. PRICE, for his comments.

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Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I thank my good friend from Texas for organizing this period of time and for highlighting what Americans all across this land are concerned about, and that is the culture of spending that you talked about, and you mentioned these wonderful promises that were going to be enacted with this new majority.

And there is a culture of spending that continues and persists, but there's also a culture of hypocrisy. It's saying one thing and doing another. It's saying one thing on the campaign trail, and then when you come to Washington, you do something exactly the opposite. And when I go home to the Sixth District of Georgia, that's what I hear about. I hear people say, "Why on Earth can't people live up to their word? Why can't they do what they said they were going to do when they ran for office?"

And the spending is one of the things that gets them so terribly irritated and so terribly annoyed because they see it. My good friend from Texas talked about selling a piece of the Green Mountains in Vermont to a specific entity. That's using hard-earned taxpayer money to benefit one entity. Madam Speaker, that's wrong. That's not the way we ought to do business here.

In fact, it hasn't been the way forever. There are some wonderful quotes about pork barrel spending, about earmarks. One from Thomas Jefferson, who said that, in essence, if we allow

the process of earmarking, pork barrel spending, to go forward, "it will be a scene of eternal scramble among the Members, who can get the most money wasted in their State; and they will always get most who are the meanest," which is a phenomenal quote when you think about it, Madam Speaker, because what we have now are individuals in this House of Representatives who have been so successful in getting earmarks, getting pork barrel money back to their districts that we now have defense contractors in this Nation who are moving their headquarters to one specific district in Pennsylvania because they believe it will benefit them to a greater degree in getting contracts from the Federal Government. A phenomenal thing.

Madam Speaker, this process is corrupt and it's corrupting. When I talk to folks back home about why it's imperative that we stop the earmarking process, something that I believe we must do, and I tell them that it's corrupt and it's corrupting, that didn't have the resonance until I put a face on that, a face that we have seen in this House by so many individuals but it's most championed in a corrupt way by a gentleman by the name of Duke Cunningham.

Duke Cunningham now sits in a Federal prison in California. He does so because he earmarked money for a personal company, that benefited one company, one company, and then they, in turn, benefited him politically. And it's happened on both sides of the aisle. But it's a process that's corrupt and it's corrupting.

Now, why do I mention Duke Cunningham by name, Madam Speaker? I do so because when he came to Washington, he was the individual who was the inspiration for the "Top Gun" movie. He was a war hero. He was an American hero. And what happened with the process of Washington was that the corruption and the corrupting influence of Washington spending that is being perpetrated and continued and expanded by this majority, that process corrupted that individual. Now, there were certainly some personal characteristic flaws, but the process itself that remains in place right now and, in fact, is being championed by this majority is a corrupt process and it's corrupting.

Madam Speaker, I would suggest to all of my colleagues that this is a process and a system that has got to end. It's got to end. The American people want fiscal responsibility. They want to make certain that they have financial security and peace of mind. That peace of mind will never come when we have a process that is this sordid, that is this offensive to the American people.

So I want to commend my good friend from Texas for his remarkable leadership in this and so many areas in Congress, a conservative stalwart, an individual who understands the importance of being fiscally responsible at

the Federal level and the consequences of not being fiscally responsible, which means that middle class Americans all across this Nation are having more of their hard-earned taxpayer money taken out of their back pocket, out of their wallet, and out of their purses in order to fund the reckless spending, irresponsible spending, culture of spending, and culture of hypocrisy that this majority has brought to Washington.

So I want to commend my good friend from Texas, and thank you so very much for the opportunity and the privilege of joining you tonight. I thank you for your leadership in this area.

Mr. HENSARLING. I thank the gentleman from Georgia for joining us tonight. And, again, I thank him for his leadership here in the House of Representatives in the area of earmark reform, clearly one of the great champions against pork barrel spending and for family spending.

Again, Madam Speaker, I think it's important for us to reflect upon what the Democrat majority said they were going to do and what they have actually done. One of the prominent Members of the Democrat leadership, the gentleman from Illinois, who was, in the last election, the chairman of the Democrat Congressional Campaign Committee, where his job, obviously, is to find things for the Democrats to say to get elected. Well, one of the things that he said on behalf of the Democrat Party was, "For far too long, business as usual has involved individual Members doling out favors in appropriations and other bills through earmarks. The American people deserve to know more than who sponsored special interest legislation. They deserve earmark reform that puts an end to special interest earmarking."

But yet, Madam Speaker, the system appears to be alive and well. Now that the Democrats have become the majority party, what do we figure out? Well, let's read from a recent column in the New York Times dated January of this year:

"Representative John Murtha has procured eye-popping chunks of pork for contractors that he helped put in business in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Every one of the 26 beneficiaries of Mr. Murtha's earmarks in last year's defense budget made contributions to his campaign kitty, a total of \$413,250, according to the newspaper Roll Call." This is the New York Times. Again, not exactly a bastion of conservative thought.

Now, Madam Speaker, I'm not here to imply that there is anything illegal about that activity. I'm not here to even imply that this in any way, shape, or form breaches House ethics rules. Now, perhaps it should. Maybe that's a debate for a different day. But you know what, Madam Speaker? It doesn't pass the taxpayer smell test. It doesn't do what the Democrats claimed they would do when they were in the minority. And now that they've been elected

to the majority, now that they've controlled this institution for almost 18 months, they are not practicing what they are preaching.

Here's another example. I quote from the newspaper Roll Call: "A new political action committee, BEST PAC, created by the brother of House Intelligence Committee Chair Representative Silvestre Reyes, raised \$50,000 this spring almost entirely from staff and clients of powerhouse lobbying shop PMA Group, and within weeks those same donors reaped millions of dollars in earmarks from Reyes and other Members of Congress closely affiliated with PMA . . . Most of the donations were made on May 7, 4 days before the intelligence panel approved the 2008 intelligence authorization bill, which included earmarks for several donors to the PAC . . ."

Again, Madam Speaker, I don't imply that this was illegal. I don't imply that this somehow breached House ethics rules. And I'm familiar with the gentleman from Texas, and I believe him to be an honorable gentleman. But far too often what the American citizen sees is he sees his paycheck shrinking to pay for earmarks so that some Member of Congress can preserve his paycheck. And at a time when they are struggling to fill up their gas tanks, at a time when they are struggling to put bread on the table, it is an outrage, it is an outrage that this pork barrel spending continues on. And, unfortunately, Madam Speaker, what we are seeing under the Democrat majority is Members of Congress passing pork barrel spending, earmarks, whether recipients get it, and I guess they're showing their gratitude, and all of a sudden they come up with a campaign donation, and then the campaign donation ends up inuring to the benefit of that particular Member of Congress, and the cycle goes on and on and on. And, again, it may be legal. It may pass the House ethics test. It does not pass the American taxpayer smell test. And even though I've been a Member of Congress now for almost 6 years, I haven't lost my ability to be outraged, and this, Madam Speaker, is outrageous.

And now I'm very happy to say, Madam Speaker, that we have been joined by a distinguished member of our leadership, the chief deputy whip, a great leader in the earmark reform movement in the House, a man I am also very proud to call my friend, and I would be happy to yield now to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CANTOR).

Mr. CANTOR. I thank the distinguished gentleman from Texas for yielding, and I thank him for his leadership on the issue of the Federal budget and what we should be doing to ensure that we are stewards of the Federal budget just as all the families across this country are expected to be stewards of their own family budget.

Now, Madam Speaker, as a proud Virginian, I would like to point to a few of the origins of the earmark discussion

that occurred many, many years ago, frankly, shortly after the founding of this country. And that great Virginian Thomas Jefferson, he wrote a letter to James Madison, another great Virginian, dated March 6, 1796, challenging Madison's proposition for improvements to roads used in the system of national mail delivery, and it was directed at the idea that we should be, as Members, actually directing public funds, taxpayer dollars, into our States.

President Jefferson wrote, in the context of directing Federal dollars, "It will be a scene of eternal scramble among the Members, who can get the most money wasted in their State; and they will always get most who are meanest."

I think this shows that the debate around earmarks is not a new one, and I think also that the impression of then Mr. Jefferson is something that we ought to pay attention to and something that we ought to, frankly, pay heed when we are talking about the challenges that we are facing today in this country.

The gentleman from Texas talked about the tremendous lack of confidence that the American public has in this Democrat-controlled Congress. It is stunning to see the public opinion numbers of what the American public thinks about the performance of this Congress. Nothing to be proud of.

I believe that that dissatisfaction, frankly, is grounded, first of all, in the inability of this Congress and this majority to solve the problems that real people are facing in their lives each and every day in their communities. All they hear are solutions based on the premise that this government in Washington somehow needs more of their hard-earned dollars. And over and over again, we continue to hear the message, and we know that this town, that this Congress, and this majority is broken. We are not rising to the occasion, fixing the problems facing the American people. And yet we continue to see a steady stream of bills making their way to the floor where we continue to see proposals to raise taxes, to take people's hard-earned money, and then we see those dollars turned around and appropriated into the earmark process.

My friend from Texas was very accurate in his quotes, right on point. We have heard over and again Members of the majority leadership, when they were in the minority, when they have become the majority leadership, continue to pledge, "We pledge to make this the most honest, ethical, and open Congress in history." That was from then minority leader Ms. PELOSI in 2006.

□ 2045

She then went on to say, "This is a place where we really need to throw up the shades and pull back the curtains." And she said, "We have to have the fullest possible disclosure, and it has to

be on earmarks in appropriations, in authorizations and in taxation. And it has to be across the board, with no escape hatches."

There was another remark made, "There has to be transparency. I'd just as soon do away with all earmarks, but that probably isn't realistic."

Now, again, we need to dedicate ourselves to fixing the problems that this country has to try to address their distrust of this government. And the first thing that we ought to do is be mindful that the many, many earmarks that make their way through this Congress frankly are not out, shone in the light of day as the majority had promised. They are not being held accountable for some of these expenditures that are being made. This is at the crux of the public's distrust of Washington.

And again, while we are facing the prospects of \$4 and \$5 a dollar gas at the pump, while families have real issues and their pocketbook is being pinched, we continue to see the unbelievable, unprecedented torrent of billions of dollars going into special interest projects and into pork that, frankly, most American people don't approve of.

It should not be about pork. It should be about paychecks. We should be focusing our attention and we should be focusing the investment of taxpayer dollars towards job creation. We ought to be rewarding those people who invest their dollars and give them back more of their hard-earned money so that we can see more jobs created, because we do know that more jobs, longer lasting jobs and a stronger economy will stem from a strong private sector and a free-market system.

And with that, I want to again thank the gentleman from Texas for organizing this Special Order tonight on the very important topic of earmarks. And I yield back.

Mr. HENSARLING. Again, I thank the gentleman from Virginia for coming down tonight and talking again about how the Democrat majority, unfortunately, seems to speak out of both sides of their mouth when it comes to pork barrel spending that is taking away from the paychecks of hard-working middle-income families so that Members of Congress can somehow keep their paychecks.

It is unfair.

And there's a big difference between the two parties. The Democrat party said they would do something about it. And they did. They put the pork barrel spending factory into high gear. The Republicans made mistakes when it came to earmark spending. That is one of the reasons that we lost in 2006.

But, Madam Speaker, we have learned our lesson. And that's why the Republican Conference supports a moratorium, a moratorium on this pork barrel spending, do away with this system and come up with a system that is more transparent and more accountable to the American people.

The Democrat majority hasn't called for anything like that. They are just

doing fine taking money away from middle-income families struggling to put food on the table, struggling to fill up their cars and pickup trucks, take that money away and spend it on monuments themselves and spend it on special interest favors for special interest groups. It has got to stop.

Madam Speaker, another great leader we have in the earmark reform movement in the United States House of Representatives, another fellow member of the Conservative Caucus of the Republican Study Committee is the gentlelady from North Carolina.

And I am happy to yield time to her at this time.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Congressman HENSARLING. I appreciate very much the leadership that you have provided to do this special order tonight.

As you've said, the system is broken. The earmark and pork barrel system is broken. And we have to do something about it.

I will have to confess that in my first 2 years in Congress, I did ask for earmarks. And my earmarks were very transparent. I felt that every project I asked for was very valid and very worthy. They were all designed to help with economic development in my district. The requests came from county commissioners, airport commissions and economic development groups. They all came very legitimately and very openly from the people in the counties that I represented in the Fifth District of North Carolina. And I have no problem at all defending those.

However, what I learned in the process is that this earmark system is badly broken. Not everybody who was requesting special funding was being as transparent as I was being. And I have come to the conclusion that we must have a moratorium on earmarks until we can fix the system.

I believe the American people have become very, very cynical about the Congress and about Washington in general. And I didn't come here to feed that cynicism. I came to Washington because I believe that I have a limited amount of talents that I can use on behalf of the people of my district and on behalf of the people of the United States of America.

And I want to do that. I am very much in love with this country and with what we stand for. And I want to make sure that I have done everything that I can to help this country succeed. It is the greatest country in the world. I have no doubt about that. And we have done enormously good things in the little over 200 years that this country has been formed.

And it is my goal to keep us as a beacon of hope for the world, to keep us as the beacon of freedom for the world, and to do everything that we can to keep the government going in a positive way.

But as I said, we have made mistakes. Democrats and Republicans have made mistakes. But I will have to say that Republicans never promised to

make the kinds of reforms that the Democrats promised to make. The Democrats said in 2006 a lot of things to get elected and to take over the majority.

We have all kinds of charts to show they made many, many promises which they have not kept. But I think this one, this promise about earmarks and pork barrel spending, and they are broken promises related to that, has made the American people even more cynical about Washington and about elected officials than they were before. And I frankly don't want to be a part of that.

If we are going to maintain our freedom, if we are going to maintain the type of country that we want, we have to get people engaged in our political process. We have to have people who want to run for office, who want to get out and vote and who want to make sure that we can continue this republic in all the positive ways that it has existed. And frankly, we can't do that as long as we allow people to use the money paid into the Treasury by hardworking Americans for projects that they deem are important.

I don't believe that any Member of Congress should ever be able to appropriate money to have any kind of facility, road or anything named for him or her. That, to me, is one of the worst things that can be done, because it is not our money. It is the money of the hardworking taxpayers. And we have no right to take that money and use it, particularly, again, in these very, very difficult times, as my colleague from Texas said, when gas prices are going up, grocery prices are going up, and the hardworking American families are really struggling to make ends meet.

We came up with a phrase for what the Democrats have done since they got elected in 2006: The House of Hypocrisy. Some of my colleagues are uncomfortable with that because it is a blotch on the House of Representatives which most of us love dearly. But they have turned it into the House of Hypocrisy because they have not kept the promises that they made.

They made lots of promises. And again, I am going to quote some of them because I think we need to do that over and over and over again.

Speaker PELOSI, then Minority Leader PELOSI: "We pledge to make this the most honest, ethical and open Congress in history," Christian Science Monitor, 11/14/2006.

"We will bring transparency and openness to the budget process and to the use of earmarks, and we will give the American people the leadership they deserve." This was in a press release issued by Speaker PELOSI 12/11/2006.

Minority Whip STENY HOYER said, "We are going to adopt rules that make the system of legislation transparent so that we don't legislate in the dark of night, and the public and other Members can see what is being done," the Washington Times, 11/25/2006.

Mr. HOYER, again, "Words will not do it. I have a good relationship with Rep-

resentative Roy Blunt. I have a good relationship with Representative John Boehner. We'll work together. We'll include them in the decision making." "To the extent we create an atmosphere of mutual respect, the American public will feel more comfortable with Congress," Hoyer website, 12/10/2006.

That is what the American people expected from the Democrats when they gave them the majority in 2006. And frankly, many of us were happy to hear the kinds of pledges that they made. And we thought, great, they have been out of power for 12 years. They have learned some things, and things will be better.

DCCC Chairman RAHM EMANUEL, "Earmark reform must do more than identify an earmark's sponsor. We need to curb the proliferation of unnecessary and suspect earmarks," townhall.com 9/12/2006, before the election.

But what has happened is that the Democratic leadership believes they don't have to keep their promises. But House conservatives are going to stand with hardworking Americans and continually demand it. We continue to offer amendments to bills that say, you cannot hide these earmarks. They have been done over and over and over again. Every promise that the Democrats made has been broken. None of them has been kept as it relates to earmarks and pork barrel spending.

We have to hold them accountable. The American people expect us to be accountable. I am accountable to the people that I represent. My work is an open book. The Democrats have found more devious ways to hide earmarks than any of us could ever have thought possible. But we are going to continue to try to ferret out those earmarks and make them public so that the American people will know what they are.

We may not be able to make the Democrats keep their promises. But we are going to reveal when they break those promises and what the consequence of breaking those promises is. We do not need to continue this broken earmark process. We need to stop it. We need to stop pork barrel spending. If we did that, we could reduce spending. We could reduce taxes. We could help the average American family cope with the increase in prices that they are coping with and help them meet those challenges more readily.

I again want to thank Mr. HENSARLING, Chairman HENSARLING, for organizing this special order on the earmark process, for bringing to light the problems that the Democrats have brought to us, and the broken promises that they have before us every day.

And I yield back to my friend from Texas.

Mr. HENSARLING. Again I thank the gentlelady from North Carolina for coming here tonight to participate in this Special Order and to try to stand up for the hardworking middle-income American families that are seeing their paychecks shrink. And one of the great

reasons their paychecks are getting ready to shrink even further is because of a budget resolution conference report passed today that includes the single largest tax increase in American history, passed courtesy of the Democrat majority that will pose a \$3,000 average tax increase on a family of four of America while they are struggling to fill up their cars and while they are struggling to put food on the table.

Why are taxes having to be increased? Well, Madam Speaker, part of the reason is because of the culture of spending fueled by these wasteful, pork barrel spending earmarks.

□ 2100

They continue to proliferate and explode under the Democrats.

I mean, what kinds of earmarks are the American taxpayer having to pay for? Well, one includes a monument that a single Member of Congress decided to dedicate to himself. It's called the monument to me, to benefit the chairman in the House Ways and Means Committee, CHARLES RANGEL.

Let me quote from the Wall Street Journal. "New York's Charlie Rangel provided smirks this week when news emerged that the Harlem congressman was humbly seeking a \$2 million earmark to celebrate the 'Charles B. Rangel Center for Public Service' at the City College of New York," that much money so that one Member of Congress can build a monument to himself. These are tax increases on hard-working American families so that Democrat Members of Congress can build monuments to themselves.

Here is another one, let me quote from the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. "Representative Mike Doyle, a Forest Hills Democrat and staunch Murtha ally is an eager apprentice. One major achievement is the Doyle Center for Manufacturing Technology based in South Oakland. Mr. Doyle helped launch the center with a \$1.5 million grant." Interesting. Here is another monument to another Democrat Member of Congress, and the list goes on and on and on.

Now, as the gentlelady from North Carolina said, not every earmark is bad, but the system is bad. The system fuels a culture of spending that is bankrupting hard-working American families as they are struggling to make that paycheck stretch. It is waste. It's an insult to these families to abuse their earnings in such a fashion.

I am very happy tonight also to see that we have been joined by one of the great conservative leaders in America, a former chairman of the House conservative caucus known as the Republican Study Committee and somebody who has been a mentor to me, a man I am proud to call my friend.

I am happy now to yield time to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SHADEGG).

Mr. SHADEGG. I thank my friend and colleague from Texas. I want to compliment him for conducting this

special order on earmarks tonight. It's an issue where the American people need to understand what is going on in the government that they elect.

I think most of them, if they harken back to their civics class in high school or grade school, would be stunned at what happens here and would find it, quite frankly, disgusting, because it is. It is a perversion of a system.

We use the term earmark, and we try to describe it. I am not certain that many people at home fully understand how the process works. To some degree, if you don't understand how the process works, you can't understand why some of us think it is so outrageous.

I want to get kind of down to some basics. Let me talk about the equity of the earmark process. Some of us think that we were each elected to come here to represent our congressional districts, and we were also elected in representing them to look at the good of the Nation.

Some of us don't believe that we were elected primarily to come to Washington and take as much money as humanly possible from the other taxpayers around the country and rip it out of their taxpayers' pockets and put it in our congressional districts. I don't remember being taught that in my civics book. Yet, the way the earmark system works in this Congress today, it is outrageously inequitable.

You might say, well, you know my congressman knows the needs of my district, so why shouldn't he get a couple of projects in your district. Every one of your congressmen who gets earmarks come back and say, look, I got you this bridge, or I got this business in our community, this money, and they say, aren't I great.

But, you know what they don't tell you? They don't tell you how much somebody else got. They don't tell you that the congressman three States over got 100 times as much money. They come and say, look, I got us \$2 million for this project right in our town. But they don't tell you that the congressman from the State two States over was more powerful than your congressman, and he didn't get \$2 million, he got \$800 million.

So the taxpayers, you, the taxpayer and the congressman whose district brought home \$2 million, you got fleeced to the tune of the \$800 million that went to the powerful congressman, and that's how it works. Earmarks in this Congress today go to powerful Members. So if you are the chairman of a powerful committee, or you are in the right position to get it done, you get, literally hundreds of millions of dollars, maybe even billions of dollars for projects that you get to direct.

But, if you were a poor American taxpayer who lives in a district where you don't have a mega powerful congressman, well, your junior congressman, your fairly new congressman, your less-than-powerful congressman,

he brings home next to nothing, but he brags about what he brought home. He just doesn't tell you that it was a fraction of what was taken out of their pockets to pay for somebody else.

Mr. HENSARLING. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. SHADEGG. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. HENSARLING. You know, it's interesting, we sit here and assume that a lot of people know what an earmark is and what pork barrel spending is. Probably the best way to define it is money that Congress takes out of their pocket to give to a specific entity that doesn't have to be competitively bid. It can go to one particular corporation. It can go to only one entity, and it doesn't go through any competitive bidding process whatsoever.

As the gentleman said, well, some Members of Congress say I know my district the best, and I am supposed to bring the pork home.

Well, the people in the Fifth District of Texas, they are not so interested in me bringing the bacon home, they want to make sure that Congress doesn't take it out of their smokehouse in the first place.

As the gentleman ably points out, when somebody is getting something for nothing, there is somebody else who is getting something for nothing.

Mr. SHADEGG. I am glad the gentleman brought that up. I am going to go through a description that I think will help people understand what we mean by earmarks and by the kind of a simple earmark that you might think about, and then the more complex, the more subterfuge, the more hidden ones.

First of all, you have powerful Members of Congress get billions, not-so-powerful Members of Congress get next to nothing, but taxpayers pay for it all. The other fascinating process that goes on here with earmarks is the at-risk Members, that is a Member who is in a competitive district and might lose, and their political party wants to help them, oh, they bulldoze money to that Member's district.

But if you have some other congressman who is secure in her District or secure in his district, well, too bad. So you better hope that your congressman is an at-risk Member of Congress because then billions of dollars will be steered to your congressman's congressional district and to your community and to the business and the jobs in that community.

But if you have a secure congressman who gets re-elected each year easily, and he is not powerful, you get a fraction amount of that money or you get zero, once again. Once again, money is coming out of your pocket and being distributed on a completely inequitable basis. It goes to the powerful Members of Congress, it goes to the at-risk Members of Congress to get them reelected.

Let's see if we understand this, my tax dollars go to fund my Federal Government, but they aren't distributed on the basis of merit to the good projects.

They aren't distributed on the basis of need, to people who are in need. They aren't distributed to the Nation's needs. They are distributed to some congressional district because that Member is powerful or to some other congressional district because that Member is at risk of losing his or her seat.

Now if you like your money being distributed on that kind of an unfair basis, then you are for earmarks. Let's talk about kind of an explanation of what earmarks are, as my colleague from Texas just mentioned.

You know, there is the kind of mundane earmark, the routine earmark. A Member of Congress gets asked to do a community project. I happen to like one, they have got a harbor in their district, that harbor needs to be dredged every few years and so they say, look, I just want to go get an earmark to get that dredged. It's asked for by the community, it's needed by the community, and it looks like a pretty innocent fair-minded earmark.

If they were all like that, we might not have any problem as long as they were allocated equally to all 435 districts in the country. Then no one would be taken advantage of. But, guess what, that's not what most earmarks are, at least that's not what many of them are. Many of them are an earmark that goes to a local college or a university or an earmark that goes to a private business. That's my favorite, earmarks that go to private businesses.

I am a congressman, I have a business in my district, and it is not quite making it, or it's a startup, so they come and see me and they say, hey, Congressman, we would like an earmark. Give us some taxpayer dollars because we can't survive in the marketplace. So I steer some money to that small business or that big business in my district.

You know what happens? This is just surprising. Do you know what happens? I would ask the gentleman to join me for a moment. Do you know what often happens? Do you know that often the executives of the company that get that earmark money, your Federal tax dollars, do they make donations to that congressman?

Mr. HENSARLING. Well, as a matter of fact, we have clearly documented that earlier this evening, and it's not just us saying it, The New York Times has said it, and I quote again, "Representative JOHN MURTHA has procured eye-popping chunks of pork for contractors he helped put in business in Johnstown, Pennsylvania."

"Every one of the 26 beneficiaries of Mr. MURTHA's earmarks in last year's defense budget made contributions to his campaign kitty, a total of \$413,250," this from the New York Times.

If the gentleman will allow me, again, under this Democrat majority, what we see too often is that Members of Congress direct earmarks to special interest recipients. They turn around

and give campaign donations to the campaign, and then the campaign helps re-elect the Member of Congress, and the cycle goes over and over under this Democrat majority.

Mr. SHADEGG. Taking back my time, I think it's stunning, but I don't like the words "special interest," because that makes you think it might be some kind of a public interest, maybe it's for hungry children or maybe it's for needy families or maybe it's for dental care? No. This is for a private for-profit corporation, a huge business advantage for them and, interestingly, the executives of that corporation just suddenly decide that they like that congressman and send him contributions.

Well, that's pretty interesting, but what about the next level of corruption in earmarks, what about could it have ever happened that a Member of Congress creates a for-profit corporation or creates a nonprofit corporation himself and puts his friends and cronies on the board of directors of that nonprofit corporation or that for-profit corporation and then earmarks money to them? Shocked. Tell me it wouldn't be so.

We are taking earmark money, we are taking taxpayer money, hard-earned money by American citizens, taking it away from them and giving that money to an entity that we created that we incorporated, and we put all the Members on its board of directors and, shock of shock, they donate money back to our campaign or, in some instances, they might hire the congressman's wife or his daughter or his son or some other needy family member.

That's very appropriate. That ought to happen with our taxpayer dollars. That's what we expected when we sent our taxes to Washington that a congressman would take that money and donate it through an earmark, direct it, force it through an earmark, not debate it on the floor of this House, to go to a for-profit or a nonprofit corporation that a congressman created that employs his son or daughter that makes donations back to him.

We haven't even talked about the lobbyist who used to work for the congressman who then went to work for a lobbying firm that seeks earmarks who, by the way, shock of shocks, asked for the earmark, got the earmark, got paid by the for-profit business or the nonprofit business for getting the earmark, and then both executives of that for-profit or nonprofit corporation and the lobbyist, former staffer, donate to the Member of Congress. This is all above board, all wonderful, all that the American taxpayers ought to think happening with their dollars.

Mr. HENSARLING. If the gentleman would yield, it's a good time to point out again what a difference there is between the two political parties on this issue. The Democrats claim they would cut these earmarks in half but they didn't do it. Instead we end up with the

second highest number of pork-barrel spending earmarks that we have seen in the history of America. They claim no more secrecy in the process. Yet we know that we have secret earmarks come in to benefit a select number of hospitals.

It has been well documented. They claim they would bring integrity to the system, and yet we continue to see earmarks coming out of this end of Washington D.C., and we see campaign contributions coming in the other end. How convenient.

Then they claimed that we can't continue to tax, we can't continue to have bridges of nowhere for America's children to pay for, but apparently we can have museums to honor Democrat Members of Congress, apparently we can have money going to the so-called Hippie Museum. Apparently we can send money to help the L.A. fashion district with their signage and streetscape improvements.

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The Republican Party has called for a moratorium on earmarks. This process needs to be reformed. The Democrat Party likes the status quo as it is. The leader of our party takes no earmarks. The leader of their party claims she would just as soon do without them; and instead, she is in the top 20 recipients of earmarks.

The Republican presidential candidate says I will veto any spending bill with an earmark. And you look at their two presidential candidates, one is in the top 10, and the other, although only in the bottom half, has still managed \$91 million of pork-barrel spending.

To add her perspective, I am happy we are joined by the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN), and I yield to her at this time.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding, and for his leadership on this issue.

Getting our hands around waste, rooting out waste, fraud and abuse is something our freshmen class when we came to Congress said we were going to be committed to. And certainly pushing forward earmarks and the issue of pork-barrel spending is something we have committed much of our time in this Congress to.

Madam Speaker, I think it is so appropriate as we talk about this issue that we realize yes, indeed, we have called for a moratorium on earmarks and would encourage all Members to join us, doing so partly because this is an issue that over time has grown and grown and grown.

When you go back and look historically, the first correspondence on this that we could find was Thomas Jefferson writing a letter to James Madison March 6, 1796, and Jefferson wrote commending to Madison did he think of all of the consequences that would come from the proposition of using public money as a bottomless pit, if you will. It is a great quote.

There are quotes from President Monroe in 1822 when he argued that Federal money should be limited to great national works since if it was unlimited, it would be liable to abuse and might be productive of evil. That's 1822, how interesting.

As we look at the period of time through the 1950s and the 1960s and 1970s and 1980s, how this body repeatedly increased spending every single year and increased the use of those earmarks every single year, and how the practice became commonplace.

Well, some of us feel like enough is enough, that the American taxpayer deserves greater consideration. Now is the time for an earmark moratorium.

DEMOCRATS WORKING TO SOLVE AMERICA'S PROBLEMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. YARMUTH) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. YARMUTH. Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to be here once again speaking on behalf of the majority makers, the freshmen Democrats elected in 2006 to bring change to Washington and who have worked very diligently over the last 16 months to begin to reverse the damage done to this country over the last 7½ years.

It is interesting, I was planning to talk about what I saw as a very encouraging sign over the last few days, the encouraging sign that we had actually solid bipartisan participation in trying to come up with solutions to some of the very daunting challenges that face this country today, including energy prices.

We had a bipartisan vote, an overwhelming bipartisan vote, to restrict additions to the strategic petroleum reserve, something which the President opposes but which overwhelming numbers of both bodies of Congress supported. And I was going to talk about the farm bill in which we had significant Republican participation in coming to grips with a new solution to our farm policy in this country. And I was going to talk about our housing initiatives, how we had significant Republican support last week in trying to craft policies that would help alleviate the serious housing situation we have and to try to keep things from getting worse.

But after listening to the partisan attack that I just heard, I have to respond because what we have heard is something that is almost in a parallel universe. It is interesting that my colleagues from the other side speak as if the last 7 or 8 years didn't exist, as if the Republicans weren't in charge of the entire government from 2001 until 2007, as if the national debt did not increase by \$5 trillion during their stewardship of this government, as if earmarks had not been developed into an art form under Republican leadership.

It is almost as if there is no history that they choose to remember.

I can understand why they don't want to remember what went on from 2001 to 2006, and before that many of the policies that were developed under Republican leadership in this Congress prior to George Bush's presidency because they don't want the American people to be reminded.

But we know from all of the polls and the voter turnout that we have seen in the last few months, we know that the American people remember what has gone on in these last few years. We know because, as we have seen in a poll over the weekend, when asked which party does the American people trust to deal with the challenges we face as a country, the American people prefer the Democratic policies by a margin of 20 percent, one of the largest margins ever recorded. It is not hard to understand why. What we have seen are failed policies from people well meaning, no question about it, but people who do not believe that government has a role in solving our problems.

We see it when people come to the government, when the average citizen comes to the government for help. We see them in our offices every day, and we talk to them at home on weekends. We know that the American people are hurting. They come to us for help. We know that nurses come to us for help. Teachers come to us for help. Social workers come to us for help. They are dealing with the pain of average American citizens every day, and we are trying to do what we can to help them.

We know that the other side does want to come to the help of American citizens from time to time if they happen to be the CEO of ExxonMobil, if they happen to be the CEO of Chevron, if they happen to be the insurance executives. Those people can always find assistance from the Republicans. But when the average citizen comes for help, no, no, no, we don't want to do that. Government is not in that business.

Well, that's why the American people turned to the Democratic Party in 2006 and said, We have had enough, it is time for a change. We believe that the Democratic Party can help working Americans solve some of the problems that face them.

I think we have made a very, very good start. From the very beginning of our leadership in the 110th Congress last January, we took steps immediately to raise the minimum wage which had not been raised in 10 years. We took steps to change the rules under which drug companies dealt with Medicare. We took steps to end the subsidy of oil companies with huge tax breaks when they are making more money than they had ever made in their history. We worked very diligently, and we talked about earmarks.

My colleagues on the other side want to make it sound like we invented earmarks, which we certainly didn't. We actually provided for the first time

some transparency in earmarks. We said if you are going to put an earmark into a bill, then you have to identify that you sponsor that earmark and you have to attest and swear that you did not reap any personal benefit. You had no personal connection with the recipient of that earmark. Those were not the policies under the Republican Congress when they had in their last budget year 16,000 earmarks. No, you could slip them in there. Nobody knew you got the earmark. You could take credit for it if you wanted to, but if you tried to find out who gave money for XYZ, you couldn't find that unless the person actually took credit for it. We changed that. We required accountability in the earmark process.

So it is interesting to listen to my colleagues talk about the horrible leadership that they contend of this Democratic Congress as if the last decade had not occurred. I think the American people have seen through that. I think there is no question that the recent results, not just in polls but in special elections for Congress, reflect the fact that the American people understand that the Republicans are out of ideas. They just are out of ideas. The idea that government will play no role in solving some of the challenges that we have has proven to be a bankrupt idea. They persist in that philosophy, and they persist as of earlier today, and we have to call the attention of the American people that these are not the facts and that there is a very distinct difference between our policies, the Democratic majority, in which we are trying to use government to help the American people while maintaining fiscal responsibility, while maintaining our PAYGO rules so we make sure that we don't add to the Federal deficit and the national debt and that we pay for what we do when we do it.

Now, there is a huge exception to that policy, as we all know. We are going to see it on the House, on this floor in the next few days. We are being asked once again to allocate billions and billions of dollars to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. We are being asked by the President, who now has the lowest job approval in modern history, we are being asked by him to give him a blank check, once again no constraints on his activities in Iraq and Afghanistan, no restrictions on his troops, no new regulations regarding the deployment of troops, just give him the money and let him try to accomplish the mission which he said was accomplished 5 years ago but which has not only not been accomplished in 2008 but which is something, a mission which we still can't define.

I would like to ask the administration, and we have on many occasions, if you want our support, if you want us to continue to fund this failed policy in Iraq, tell us what the mission is. Tell us once and for all what the clear objectives are, and we will listen and we will use our judgment and see if that is the type of thing that the American people will support.